



ECOLOGY TECHNICAL NOTE

SITE NAME & ADDRESS	Slate Pitts, Chain Road, Slaithwaite, HD7 5TY.
DEVELOPMENT PROPOSAL	Construction of 2no. dwellings
PLANNING REFERENCE	Not known
ECOLOGY ASSESSMENT TYPE	BIODIVERSITY NET GAIN
DATE	24 June 2024
AUTHOR	Ryan Knight BSc (Hons) MCIEEM - Principal Ecologist

INTRODUCTION & BACKGROUND

Knight Sky Ecology was commissioned to provide a (Small Sites) Statutory Biodiversity Metric calculation tool (hereafter referred to as the metric tool) for the proposed development at Slate Pitts. This technical note has been produced to accompany the metric tool and provide an overview of the results.

In England, biodiversity net gain is required under a statutory framework introduced by Schedule 7A of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990. This legislation was inserted into the 1990 Act by Schedule 14 of the Environment Act 2021, and was amended by the Levelling Up and Regeneration Act 2023.

Under the statutory framework for biodiversity net gain, subject to some exceptions, every planning permission is subject to a condition that the biodiversity gain objective is met ("the biodiversity gain condition"). This objective is for development to deliver at least a 10% increase in biodiversity value relative to the pre-development biodiversity value of the on-site habitat. This increase can be achieved through on-site biodiversity gains, registered off-site biodiversity gains or through statutory biodiversity credits.

METHODS

The latest version of the metric tool and User Guide (Feb 2024) have been accessed from:
<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/statutory-biodiversity-metric-tools-and-guides>

Site Data

A site walkover was undertaken on **8th May 2024** by Ryan Knight MCIEEM (Full member of the Chartered Institute of Ecology and Environmental Management). Ryan has extensive experience in survey and site assessment for habitats and protected species and holds a Level 2 Natural England Class Licence for bats (ref. 2015-12611-CLS-CLS) and a Level 1 licence for great crested newts (ref. 2015-16727-CLS-CLS).

All habitats within the site were described and mapped using UK Habitat Classification (UKHab) Version 2 definitions (UKHab Ltd, 2023).



RESULTS

BASELINE

Designated Sites

The proposed development is not located within 500m of any statutory designated sites. In addition, there are no such sites within 2km.

Priority Habitats (including Ancient Woodland)

The nearest priority habitat is an area of deciduous woodland (335m east-north-east).

Kirklees Wildlife Habitat Network

The site is not within the Wildlife Habitat Network.

Habitats

Figure 1 at the foot of this document provides an overview of the habitat baseline as existing in May 2024.

The site area measures 2097.1m² and comprises buildings, a garden, a small section of modified grassland, a driveway and, land to the side and rear which were associated with the mechanic's workshop. This land had a stone gravel substrate; however, as it has been disused for several years the surface has been colonised by grasses and short perennial vegetation. It has been assigned as UKHab category *u1f - Sparsely vegetated urban land* (moderate condition).

Trees within the garden comprised sycamore, conifers and a Scots Pine. All such trees were small (Diameter Breast Height under 30cm). Therefore, in accordance with the guidance, these trees are not included in the metric tool. There was a small willow tree to the rear of the site and this tree has been included in the metric tool.

The combined biodiversity value of the existing habitats is **0.4409 habitat units**. The habitats of measurable value that would be lost as a result of development is the area of grassland, the sparsely vegetated land and the garden.

Hedgerows

There is a Leyland cypress hedge on the north side of the site. This hedgerow has a biodiversity value of **0.0101 hedgerow units**. It is to be retained.

Watercourses

No watercourses were identified within the site or within 10m of the boundary.

CREATION

Habitats

Figure 2 located at the foot of this document provides a UK Habitat Classification map of the site as proposed. It has been based on the DWG (CAD) file provided by the agent.

The habitats to be created with a measurable biodiversity value are limited to vegetated gardens only. The post-development value would equate to **0.02809 habitat units** (a loss of 0.16 units from existing).



Technically, in order to achieve a 10% net gain, off-site habitat creation is required. There is more than a sufficient area of land within the existing land holding to provide net gain and such an area of land has been set aside to the north. This area comprises modified grassland. The SSM does not have an off-site section. However, the most feasible and ecologically desirable solution to achieve biodiversity net gain within the land holding is to plant broadleaved trees in this section. **A total of 19 native, broadleaved trees are required to be planted in order to achieve a 10% net gain.** This number of trees also takes into account the existing size (600m²) and value of land in which the trees would be planted (not within the metric tool). The developer may wish to plant more than this to account for any potential failures.

The location of the planted trees needs to account for future canopy and root growth. The figure below provides potential planting locations.

Figure 1.1. Location for tree planting

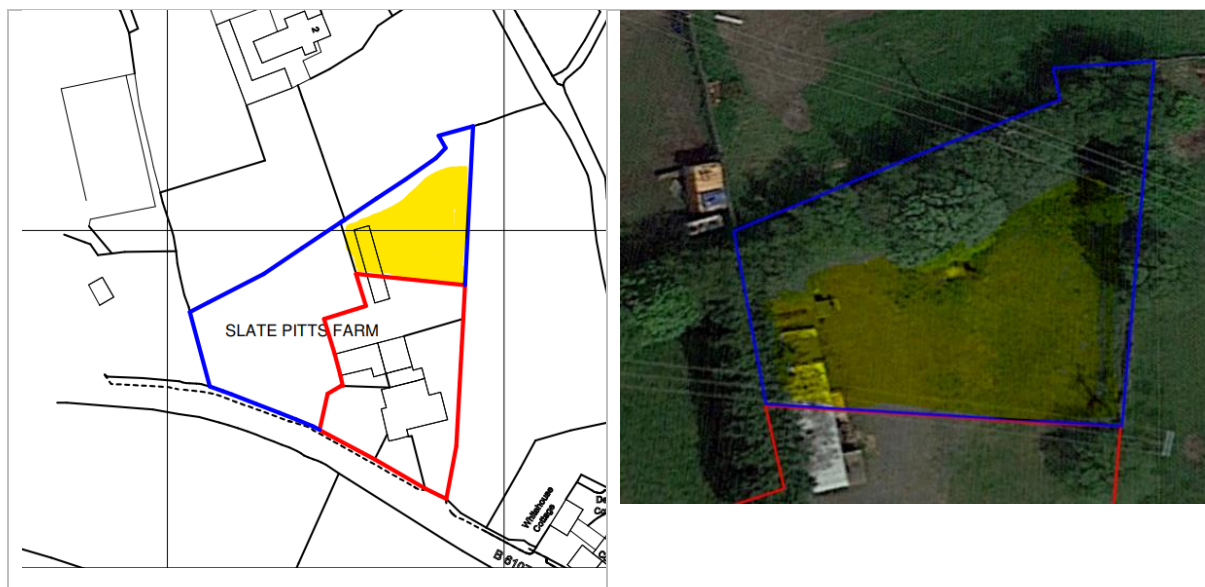


Photo 1.1. View southwards over off-site land



On the presumption that 19 trees would be planted within the off-site land, the combined value of the on-site and off-site habitats post-development would be **0.7573 habitat units (including the off-site land not included in the submitted metric tool).**



Hedgerows

Hedgerow planting would include one native species hedgerow along the boundary of the garden along Chain Road (assumed 'moderate' condition). The combined value of the retained and created hedgerows post-development would be **0.06 hedgerow units**.

SUMMARY

Provided that the above specifications are met, the development proposals will result in:

- a net gain of biodiversity value comprising **0.0.0764 habitat units (11.22 %)**; and,
- a net gain of biodiversity value comprising **0.0499 hedgerow units (493.81%)**

The development will therefore meet the biodiversity net gain condition for habitats and hedgerows as the 10% net gain will be achieved provided that tree planting is undertaken and the trees are managed and protected for at least 30 years in line with the legislation.

The time to target condition of the habitats (namely, the gardens) is 1 year. The time to target condition of the hedgerow is 5 years and the trees 27 years.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Post-consent Requirements & Recommendations

The statutory framework for biodiversity net gain requires a Biodiversity Gain Plan to be submitted and approved by the planning authority to discharge the biodiversity gain condition prior to the commencement of development. This should detail the measures undertaken to achieve the required 10% net gain as outlined in the options above. Local planning authorities have and are integrating their own approaches to detailing planning conditions.

As stated on the Government's Biodiversity Net Gain guidance¹,

"Local planning authorities should take a proportionate approach to these information requirements (which should be set out in their local lists) focused on only necessary additional information, and integrated with wider information requirements on biodiversity and other environmental matters, smaller developments should generally be subject to fewer information requirements than a major development unless the development would have an adverse impact on valuable onsite habitats".

In line with the limited scope of the required enhancements for the site, it may therefore not be appropriate to assign substantial monitoring and management planning conditions. However, a planning condition would be required in relation to the establishment, management and protection of the planted trees.

The broadleaved trees will need to be sourced from a reputable stockist, using British stock of local provenance. Species such as oak (*Quercus robur*), silver birch (*Betula pendula*), alder (*Alnus glutinosa*), hazel (*Corylus avellana*), wild cherry (*Prunus avium*) and holly (*Ilex aquifolium*) are recommended. Non-native species must be avoided. Only UK based stock is advised to be purchased.

¹ <https://www.gov.uk/guidance/biodiversity-net-gain#submission-of-the-biodiversity-gain-plan>



Further Commitments

The post-development habitat plan has been based on the layout plan designed by the agent with the addition of habitats which can be most feasibly be achieved within the site. This habitat plan is required to be supplemented with the design of a tree planting schedule and planting establishment and management measures which are typically completed by a specialist landscape contractor prior to the commencement of the works. Ecological consultancies do not typically design landscaping plans.

PHOTOS

Photo 1.

View of north-west corner of site.



Photo 2.

View east across north part of site.





Photo 3.

Front garden
(south).



Photo 4.

Side garden
(west).





Photo 5.

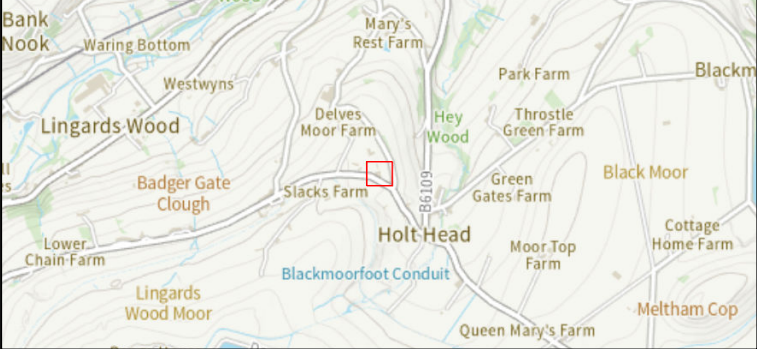
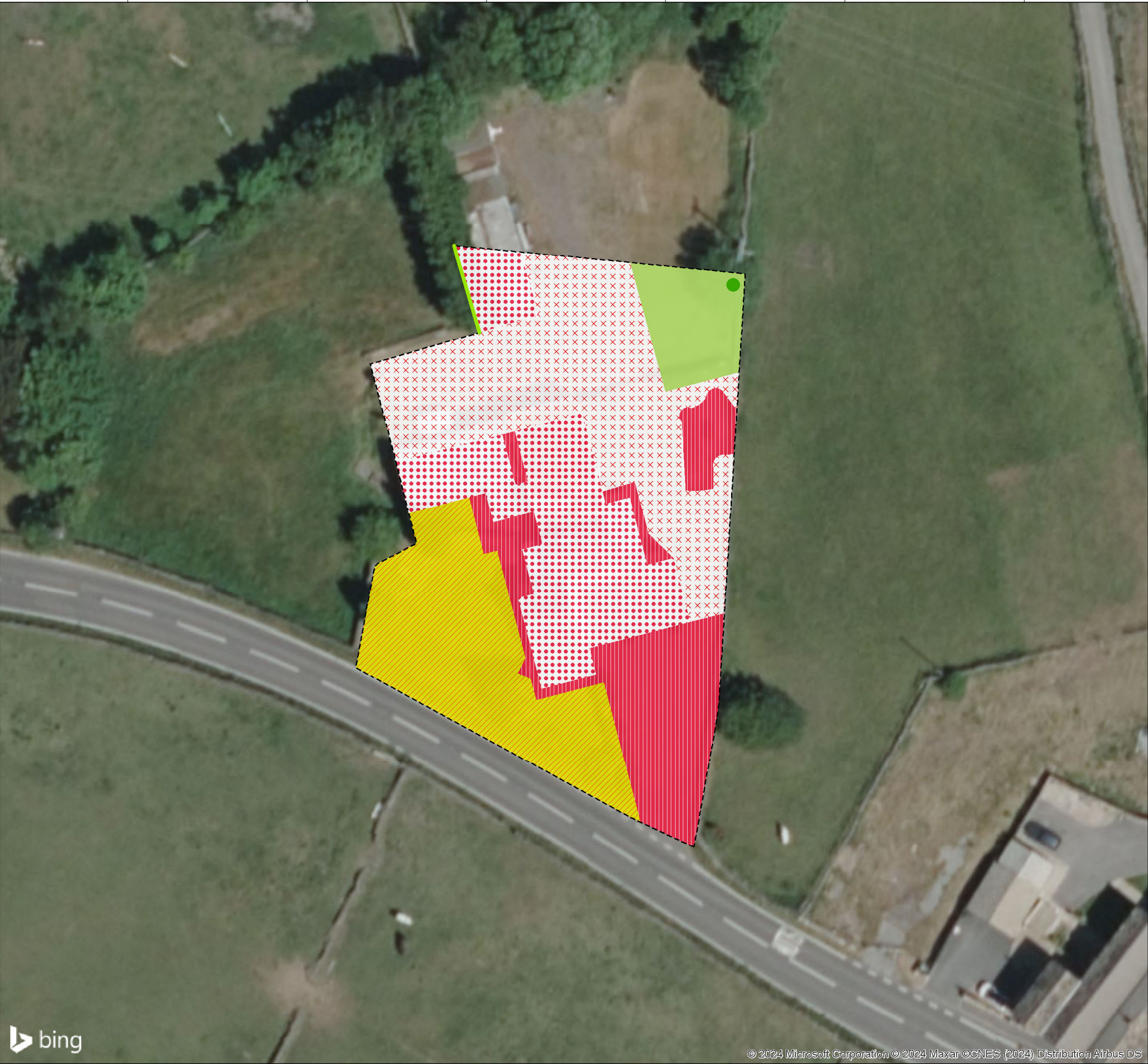
View west over
east section of
site.



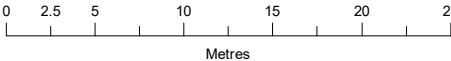


FIGURES (NEXT PAGE)

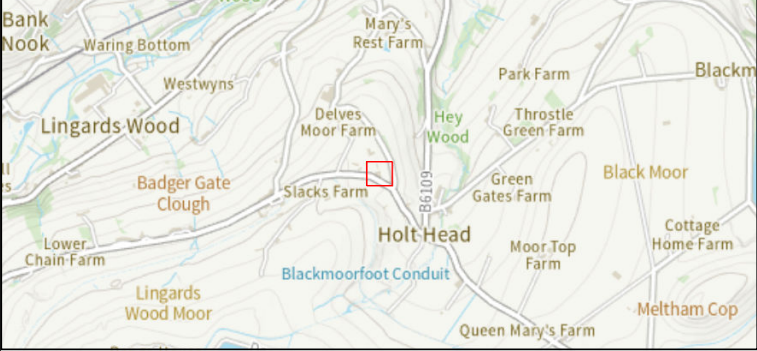
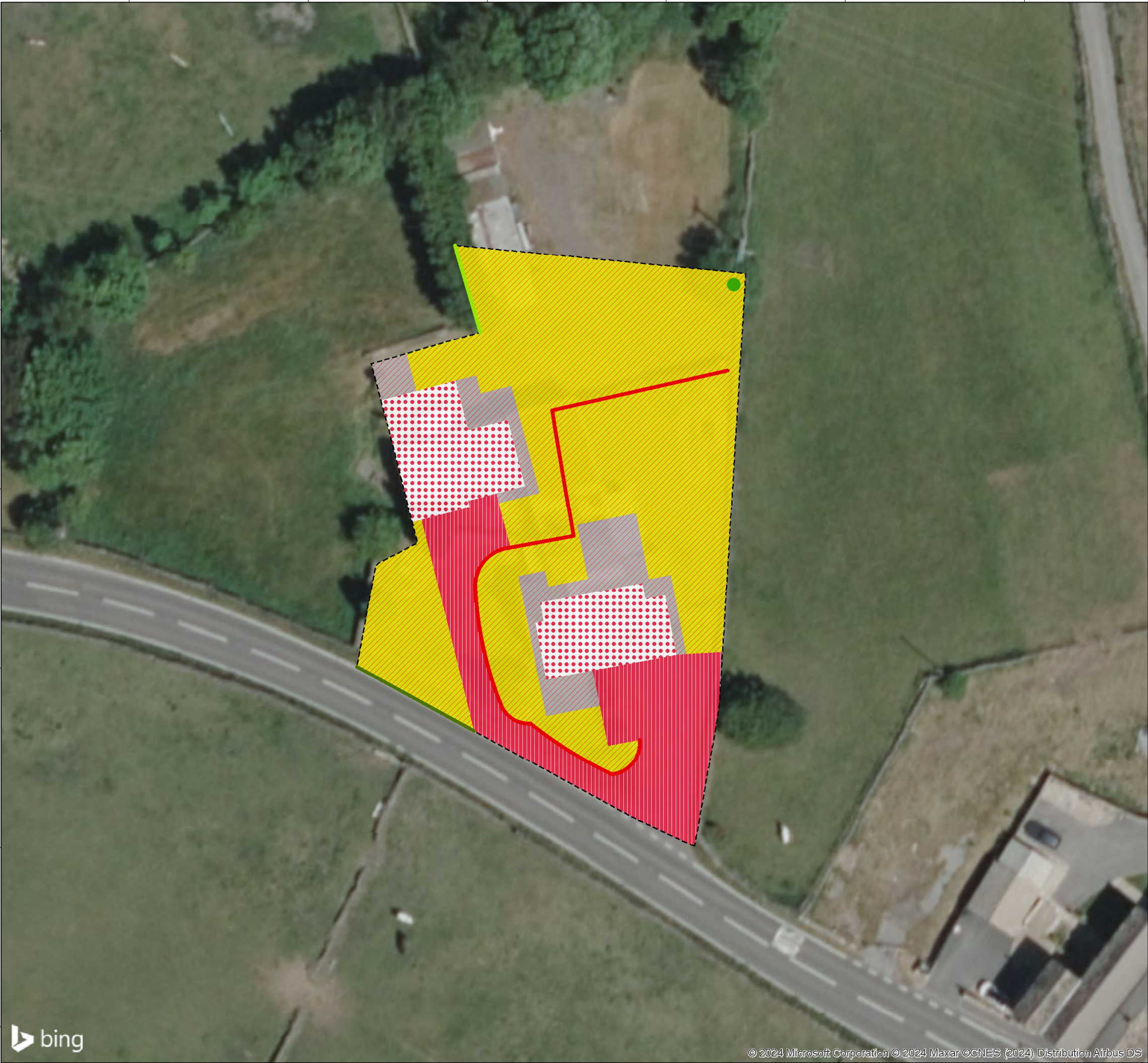
- **FIGURE 1. UK HABITAT CLASSIFICATION MAP (BASELINE)**
- **FIGURE 2. UK HABITAT CLASSIFICATION MAP (POST-DEVELOPMENT)**



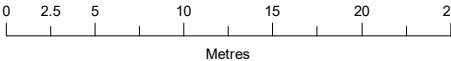
Survey Information	
	Site boundary (2,097.1m ²)
UKHab Habitat Survey	
	g4 - Modified grassland (134.1m ²)
	u1b - Developed land; sealed surface (381.2m ²)
	u1b5 - Buildings (477.7m ²)
	u1f - Sparsely vegetated urban land (645.1m ²)
	828 - Vegetated garden (459.0m ²)
	h2b - Non-native and ornamental hedgerow (10.1m)
	32 - Scattered tree (1)



PROJECT TITLE							
SLATE PITTS, CHAIN ROAD, SLAITHWAITE							
DRAWING TITLE							
Figure 1: UK Habitat Classification Map (Baseline)							
VER	DATE	REMARKS	Drawn	Checked			
1.1	18/06/24	UKHab	MP	RK			
DRAWING NUMBER:							
KSEcology/SlatePitts/UKHab							
SCALE	1:425	PLOT SIZE	A3	DATUM	OSGB	PROJECTION	BNG
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Survey Information	
	Site boundary (2,097.1m ²)
UKHab Habitat Survey	
	u1b - Developed land; sealed surface (383.7m ²)
	u1b5 - Buildings (275.1m ²)
	828 - Vegetated garden (1,261.5m ²)
	829 - Unvegetated garden (176.8m ²)
	h2a - Native hedgerow (14.9m)
	h2b - Non-native and ornamental hedgerow (10.1m)
	114 - Dry stone wall (81.8m)
	32 - Scattered tree (1)



PROJECT TITLE							
SLATE PITTS, CHAIN ROAD, SLAITHWAITE							
DRAWING TITLE							
Figure 2: UK Habitat Classification Map (Post-Development)							
VER	DATE	REMARKS	Drawn	Checked			
1.1	18/06/24	Post-Development	MP	RK			
DRAWING NUMBER:							
KSEcology/SlatePitts/Post-Development							
SCALE	1:425	PLOT SIZE	A3	DATUM	OSGB	PROJECTION	BNG
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